



Appendix A

Public Comments and Responses

Seven Bends State Park Access Study Public Information Meeting

August 17, 2021 - 5:30 PM

Summary of Questions Submitted during Public Information Meeting

Question	Response
Q: Is the S-curve at the bridge the primary impetus for the proposed change?	While the S. Hollingsworth Road S-curve is a significant geometric concern, it is not the only issue associated with the existing roadway. Substandard roadway width, shoulders, vertical and horizontal curvature and pavement section are all concerns for park access and safety that contribute to the recommendations as presented.
Q: Have funds already been allocated for this project? What is the anticipated cost?	Funding has not been allocated for this improvement. The recommendations associated with the study are planning-level improvement alternatives only. Locality support and application for funding consideration would be necessary for the potential advancement of a recommendation into an actual project. Funding would need to be secured through a state or federal transportation funding grant or allocated through actions by state legislators.
Q: Will the new road and bridge be above river level to reduce the number of floodings and needs for the rope bridge as well as adjacent parking?	The new crossing recommendation and cost estimate on S. Hollingsworth Road assumes a slightly higher low-water bridge (a few feet) that may provide some additional protection from minor flooding. Due to the cost and impacts associated with constructing a new bridge outside of the floodplain, this alternative was determined to be impractical and was not advanced.
Q: Has there been a cost/benefit analysis based on visitation to this entrance of Seven Bends? Visitation appears very low, even on weekends.	A cost / benefit analysis was not conducted as part of the study. Should a study recommendation advance for funding consideration in the future, a cost / benefit analysis could be considered.
Q: How is the road surfaced? Guard rails?	The recommendation to improve the S. Hollingsworth Road connection would consist of a paved surface (VDOT rural local road standard). The need for guard rails would be determined during a future design stage should the recommendation receive funding and advance as a project.
Q: When will this project start? How long will it take?	The study recommendations are planning-level improvement alternatives only. Funding would need to be applied for and allocated for a future project to be advanced.
Q: Could you review the environmental impacts that will be considered?	The access study considered a high-level review and consideration of floodplain, mapped wetlands and steep slopes. Should a future project advance to improve access to the state park, a full environmental review would be conducted a part of the project design phase.
Q: How are you accounting for visitors to the Muse Vinyards and increase use of Air B&B/s on the park side of the river?	Collected traffic counts utilized in the study included all vehicles on the roadway regardless of surrounding uses.
Q: Could you review the traffic projections again? You indicated that it included non-park traffic. What is current & projected traffic for the park only?	The presentation compared 2019 daily park visitors to future daily park visitors when the park is fully built-out. The 2019 park volumes showed an average of 31 weekday visitors and 116 weekend visitors. Forecasted volumes consisted of up to 200 weekday visitors and up to 740 weekend visitors.
Q: Your numbers are way off. Come visit personally on a good weather weekend. Don't do a survey on a day with bad weather.	Acknowledged. The final study report will include current visitation counts from DCR.
Does this count include residents or just park users	Collected traffic counts utilized in the study included all vehicles on the roadway regardless of surrounding uses.
Consider bike climbing lane on ascending grades.	Should a future project advance to improve access to the state park, shoulder and bike lane width design will be determined during the project design phase. Roadway grade would be considered for the appropriate design of potential bike lanes.
Are we maintaining a 10% grade to lessen the excavation impact or is it the best we can do?	The 10% grade assumption of the planning-level alignment and cost estimate was utilized to minimize property and construction cost impacts.
When is the last date to submit questions again? Once funding and plans are approved, when would construction commence?	Public comments will be collected through Tuesday August 31, 2021. Should a future project advance to improve access to the state park, a typical project schedule would consist of 6 - 8 years following allocation of funding.

Seven Bends State Park Access Study Public Information Meeting
 Summary of Questions Submitted by email following the Public Information Meeting

Question	Response
<p>Q: One question that I did not see addressed in the recording. With the alternative 3 for the S. Hollingsworth bridge, will the road be paved from the bridge all the way to the state park entrance, or will it only be paved where it comes down the hill to the river from Reservoir Rd. ?</p>	<p>The cost estimate associated with the Alignment 3-modified alternative only includes paving along the new roadway to the tie-in point south of the river on existing S. Hollingsworth Road. Should this recommendation advance as a project in the future, there would be the potential to include additional paving improvements along S. Hollingsworth Road from the tie-in to the State Park. This work could also be considered as part of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) additional Master Planning efforts to be conducted following the completion of the Access Study.</p>
<p>Q: Thank you for holding the virtual Public Information Meeting on August 17th. It was well done and nicely thought out. I especially liked the effort you put into comparing the grades and costs of the three alternatives you identified and the work you did with Muse Vineyards and others to accommodate their concerns.</p> <p>One thought for your consideration: The current access road to the south end of the Park (S. Hollingsworth Rd.) is gravelly as well as curvy, largely unpaved except for the first 100 yards or so past its intersection with Reservoir Road. This makes downhill braking and turning for both bicyclists and motorists very dangerous, especially during dry conditions like we are now experiencing. It seems that properly paving this short run of road in the near future is an alternative that should be considered. It would make accessing the Park much safer and easier, for much less money than the \$14 or \$15 Million dollars the other alternatives price out at. I also think that a low cost project like this would be much easier to obtain funding for, and thus much more likely to be funded soon.</p> <p>I suggest that you cost out and include this option in your final report.</p>	<p>Given the current limitations of the VDOT residency maintenance budget, paving the remaining portion of S. Hollingsworth Road to the current low-water bridge through the state's Rural Rustic Road program would be unlikely. There would need to be support from Shenandoah County to add the roadway to their Rural Rustic Road paving priorities and a paving improvement would likely be many years out. Additionally, a paving improvement would not address the roadway geometric issues or condition and limitations of the existing low-water bridge.</p>
<p>Q: I represent the Nora E. Long Trust (the "Trust") in connection with the property that it owns in Shenandoah County, Virginia. This property may be impacted by the proposed improvements to S. Hollingsworth Road as a part of the access improvements for the new Seven Bends State Park.</p> <p>There are presently three/four alignments for intermediate-term access to the park that would impact the Trust's property—Alignments 1, 2 3 and 3 modified. At this time, the Trust is unable to express a preference among these three alignments, as each alignment would have its own set of negative outcomes for the property. However, the Trust would like to remain engaged with VDOT and Shenandoah County in the design process.</p> <p>We request a meeting with the project team so that we can better understand the three/four alternatives being considered. A meeting will allow us to provide specific feedback that the project team can consider when determining which, if any, alternative is the best.</p> <p>Please contact me at your earliest convenience so that we can identify a date and time for a meeting (virtual or in-person).</p>	<p>Virtual meeting scheduled for Wednesday September 15, 2021 at 3 pm.</p>

Seven Bends State Park Access Study Public Information Meeting
 Summary of Virtual Meeting Discussion with Representatives of the Nora E. Long Trust

Question	Response
Q: During the virtual meeting between DCR, VDOT, Mr. Coughlin and Mr. Svedberg, numerous questions were discussed related to details of the potential project that would not be known until the Preliminary Engineering design stage should a funded project advance in the future.	VDOT re-emphasized the planning-level, conceptual nature of the Access Study. The purpose of the Access Study is to provide DCR with recommendations that provide a magnitude of scope and cost for improving access to the state park to assist with the additional DCR Master Planning effort to follow the Access Study.
Q: Why did the limits of disturbance change between the Alternative 3 and Alternative 3-modified concepts (especially at the initial curve at the west side of the alignment)?	The planning-level limits of disturbance associated with each alignment alternative were generated by a program that determines a conceptual profile using the alignment center line and typical section compared to existing grades. Alignment 3-modified lengthened the alignment center line compared to the original Alignment 3, therefore modifying the planning-level limits of disturbance.
Q: Are there opportunities to enhance landscaping / screening along the new alignment since construction would clear a significant area of mature tree cover along the project limits?	Given the recommendation's purpose of improving access along S. Hollingsworth Road to the state park, there are anticipated to be opportunities to incorporate increased landscaping and / or decorative screening / fencing. The ability to include these elements will be evaluated and determined during the Preliminary Engineering design stage should a funded project advance in the future.
Q: Will the new alignment allow for the continuance of access to the existing cabin located on the river frontage of the Nora E. Long Trust property?	Based on the preferred alternative of Alignment 3-modified, there are anticipated to be opportunities to maintain access to portions of the existing roadbed, the pedestrian bridge over the river, and the cabin located on the Nora E. Long property as described by Mr. Svedberg during the meeting. The ability to maintain future access to these elements will be evaluated and determined during the Preliminary Engineering design stage should a funded project advance in the future.
Q: What is the planned timeframe for DCR to develop additional park facilities, such as a visitor center?	David Collett with DCR explained that due to the limits of the current access to the property, Seven Bends State Park has reached development capacity until such time that access is improved.